

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 40 are pending, and an Office Action dated Feb. 4, 2005 rejected all claims. Specifically, Claims 1 – 40 were provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 – 37 of copending Application No. 10/042,485. In addition, Claims 1 – 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over *Sato et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,852,656) in view of *Itaru et al.* (High-fidelity Visual Telecommunication and Tele-collaboration System using ATM Networks).

In response, the Applicant submits a terminal disclaimer to overcome the provisional double patenting rejection. Moreover, the Applicant provides the following remarks with respect to the substantive rejection.

As understood by the Applicant, *Sato et al.* discloses a network conferencing system that tracks the attendance or absence of conference participants. However, as recognized by the Office Action, *Sato et al.* does not disclose that the ID of the attendees are in anyway broadcast to the other user terminals, or that there is a graphical indication of the presence of other attendees is shown on the display devices of the other user terminals (i.e. by icons). As stated in col. 5 of *Sato et al.*, the attendee list is stored in a server which may be accessed later by others to see who attended the conference, but there is no disclosure that during the conference an icon based representation of the attendees is displayed.

In addition, *Sato et al.* fails to disclose that the user terminals have “an area for icon display of the generating electronic equipment and an area for icon display of the output electronic equipment are separated” (Claim 1). The section of *Sato*

et al. cited by the Office Action (col. 5, lines 5-13, 54-65) simply fails to address this specific limitation. In fact, it is not clear that the system of *Sato et al.* even provides any means for the user terminals to determine via icons what other equipment is present on the network conference, as *Sato et al.* is more directed to tracking attendance and notes of the meeting.

The Office Action cites *Itaru et al.* as disclosing "different icons and separate display" citing Fig. 3. However, as understood by the Applicant, *Itaru et al.* also fails to disclose the specific icon elements of Claim 1. The cited figure, Fig. 3, does not appear to have any icon-based representations of either the attendance of participants, nor of the other network equipment, as specifically recited in the present claims. The cited figure simply shows the virtual "chalkboard" that is displayed on a screen. As further illustrated in Fig. 4, the "Preview area" and "Save area" boxes on the right and bottom of the screen, respectively, are just small "thumbnails" of other "chalkboard" views, and do not represent icons of any other equipment or attendees. The boxes on the left of Fig. 3 are listed as "Menu buttons" and are therefore function buttons and not icons representative of other equipment on the network.

Thus, even assuming that the combination proposed by the Office Action is valid, the combination still fails to make a *prima facie* case of obviousness, since the combination would not teach or suggest of one of skill in the art to create a network conferencing system utilizing icons on a display, wherein the other network equipment is represented by the icons.

Thus, the independent Claims of the present invention are allowable over the cited prior art of record for at least these reasons.

Furthermore, Claims 2, 18, 23 and 36 are allowable, since the combined teachings of the art do not have icon displays of the generating electronic equipment and the output electronic equipment, it is clear that the cited references do not disclose a function to enable selection of the icon displays either. The cited reference to Sato et al. does not support the rejection of this additional limitation.

As to Claims 3, 17, 24, 33 and 37, the cited reference to *Sato et al.* does not disclose that the attendant electronic equipment has a function to enable selection of the icon display request for displaying attribute information about data generated and stored by the selected generating electronic equipment, where the display function displays a list of the attribute information. In the disclosure cited by the Office Action, there is no discussion of "attribute information" and therefore these claims are allowable for at least this reason.

Claims 4, 11, and 25 specifically require that the icons be selectable or non-selectable, based on the availability of the equipment. Since the combined teachings of the cited references do not disclose representing the underlying equipment as icons, the reference clearly do not teach representing the availability of the equipment by selectable or non-selectable icons.

As to Claims 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19 – 21, 22, 26, 27, 29 – 32, 34, 35 and 38 – 40, as noted above, *Itaru et al.* does not teach disclosing the network equipment as icons, so the additional limitations of these claims referring to icon representations cannot be met by the cited references.

Claim 10 has specific limitations relating to attribute information, and as noted above, the cited references fail to disclose this specific limitation.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the Office Action has failed to establish a prima facie case of obviousness, and therefore the pending Claims are in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: May 4, 2005

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